SOLID WASTE DIVISION

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 2/16/09
HB 560

City of Billings
Public Works Department
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P.O. Box 1178
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Billings, Montana 59103
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February 16, 2009

House Natural Resources Committee
Montana Legislature
Helena, Montana

Re: City of Billings Opposition to HB 560

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The City of Billings strongly opposes the passage of HB 560, "An Act Encouraging the Salvaging of Recyclable and Reusable Materials At Landfills," for the reasons listed below and respectfully requests this bill be tabled in Committee.

1. HB 560 suggests that it is feasible to **safely** allow the public to scavenge from waste placed in a landfill. This premise is false. Modern day landfills are not unlike construction sites where large machinery operates continuously and the safety hazards are great. Because landfills are inherently dangerous, most landfills restrict public access.

2. HB 560 takes the advancements made in solid waste management and sets them back twenty years to the days of open dumps. This bill would require landfill operators to leave garbage uncompacted and uncovered for a period of time. This scenario would be dangerous, unhealthy and an operational nightmare.

3. The Billings Regional Landfill receives between 1000 and 1600 tons of waste per day. In addition to municipal solid waste, waste streams include non-infectious medical waste, non-hazardous industrial waste, agricultural waste, sewage-plant sludge and dead animals. Waste types are not segregated, nor could they be. Our job is to bury these wastes as quickly as possible. Allowing the public to comb through a typical day's waste pile while we attempt to bury it is, to put it mildly, incomprehensible.

4. Recyclables need to be removed from the waste stream **BEFORE** being co-mingled and delivered to the landfill for burial. Landfills **ARE NOT** material recovery facilities.

Please vote NO on HB 560!

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Butler
Environmental Compliance Coordinator
Billings Solid Waste Division

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